

Big Bell companies are blocking access to their networks and stopping competition before it can even begin for local service, long-distance, the Internet, cell phone services, and new technologies like making calls over the Internet. If these mergers go through, only two companies will control 90 percent of the consumer market. Was this what Judge Green had in mind when he ordered the break-up of the former "Bell System"? These mergers would put the interests of a few large corporations over the interests of individual consumers, and YOU have the opportunity and the duty to block them. In a world of increased competition, consumers should be enjoying unlimited local and long-distance telephone calls, and high-speed Internet access, for about \$40 --- \$15 for community Internet and \$25 for unlimited phone calls over the Internet. But today, this costs about \$90, more than double the price it could realistically be! The FCC should block these mergers, forcing the providers to find new ways of lowering the costs of these services, particularly of high-speed Internet, which is becoming essential to modern life and is the gateway to exciting new technologies, like making phone calls on the Internet and streaming in video over the Internet. Also America now finds itself falling behind the rest of the world in broadband deployment. We are currently almost unbelievably 16th, which places us far behind countries like Japan and Korea, countries which have opened up the building blocks of broadband phone and cable lines to competitors. This proposed merger will only worsen these problems and therefore must be blocked. It would stifle competition, raise prices, and lead to fewer choices, making the problem worse, not better. Thank you for your help in this matter.